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Adab al-Suluk
A Treatise on Spiritual Wayfaring

by
Shaykh Najm al-Din Kubra

The Persian translation from Arabic

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Contents

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The Persian Translator's Introduction

Shaykh Najm al-Din Kubra is one of the leading shaykhs of the Sufi path (*Tariqah*). His name is Ahmad, his title is "al-Tammat al-Kubra" and his birthplace was Khwarazm. His fruitful life lasted nearly seventy-eight years. It is said that he died in 618/1221.

In his youth he set out for travelling. In Egypt he joined the circle of Shaykh Ruzbahan Misri and attended his lectures and sermons. The teacher, impressed by the intelligence and purity of heart of his disciple, loved him as his own son and later married his daughter to him. After some time the young farer of the Sufi path (*salik*) resumed his journey and benefited from the leading shaykh of every city. When he returned to Egypt, Ruzbahan found that he had become a perfect man who knew the secret of spiritual wayfaring (*suluk*) and had learned the rules and ways of the various stages of love (*Ishq*) and that he was capable of teaching and guiding others. Therefore, he advised him to return to his native place, Khiyuk, situated in Khwarazm, and engage in guiding the seekers of the path and disseminate Sufi teachings.

Shaykh Najm al-Din left for Khwarazm along with his wife and children and set up a hospice (*khaniqah*) and founded the Dhahabiyyah and Qurbaniyyah and other *Sufi* orders. He trained many disciples *who* themselves later became saints (*wali*) and teachers (*murshid*), like Majd al-Din Baghdadi, Shaykh `Attar, Sa’d al-Din Hamawi and Najm al-Din Razi.

As to the date of his death, his biographers are unanimous that the Shaykh was martyred, along with his disciples, on the

tenth of Jamadi al-'Awwal 618/1221, while defending his city against the attack of the Mongols.

Among the eight works attributed to him by historians, there is one exegesis of the Qur'an, of which not even a single copy has been found. Another is a small treatise in Persian under the title of *Fi adab al-salikin* ("The Rules of the Wayfarers") which exists in the Asian Museum.

The present tract is the translation of one of the Shaykh's treatises in Arabic entitled *Adab al-suluk ila Hadrat Malik al-Muluk*, which consists of two sections:

- One is a spiritual journey towards God (*Haqq*) through removal of the veils of negligence and the veils of distance and darkness.
- The other is a physical journey in the vast earth of God.

Out of these two journeys, here we have translated the one related to esoteric wayfaring, on the basis of a manuscript in the. Central Library of the Tehran University. I dedicate this work to those steeped in mysticism and intoxicated by the wine of *Tawhid.*

It is hoped that this brief work will invoke interest among researchers so that they are inspired to translate other works of the great Shaykh as well as to do research on his life.

Husayn Muhyi al-Din Qumshehi

هُوَالحَقُّ

هُوَالحَقُّ

He is the Truth.

All praise and gratitude is due to God, the Wise and the Merciful; the God Who enables His slaves to travel through the horizons (*afaq*) so that they may observe the wonders of His Might and Wisdom and discover the proofs of His Majesty, as well as the signs of His Grace and Mercy in all directions and corners of the world; the God Who makes the (satanic) selves of - the wayfarers to die and makes manifest the hidden secret of their inner selves, and brings what is concealed to light through the hardships of journey, the taking of risks, and the separation from home and children and the avoidance of association with others (than Allah) and shunning all except Allah, the Master of the Kingdom (*Malik al-Mulk*). May God's peace and praise be upon the chief of mankind and the noblest of the human species, Muhammad al-Mustafa, his pure Family, his Companions and his Ummah. Therefore, surrender yourself totally to *Hadrat-e Haqq* (The Truth, i.e. God).

O slave of Allah! Know that you are a wayfarer (*salik*) seeking your Lord and ultimately one day you would meet Him, as said in a tradition: Whoever hopes to meet God should know that the time of the meeting will come. And you should know that God, the Exalted, by His perfect Might and Wisdom has destined two journeys for the Children of Adam:

- One of them is involuntary (*qahri*),
- and the other one is voluntary (*ikhtiyari*).

As to the involuntary journey,
- the starting point is the father's loins (*sulb*);
- the second stage is the mother's womb;
- the third stage is the physical world;
- and the fourth stage is that of the grave, which is either a garden out of the gardens of paradise or is a pit out of the pits of hell.
- The fifth stage is the Day of Resurrection, which is equal to fifty thousand years of this world.
- After that stage you will reach your eternal home and attain the real abode - that is, the abode of peace (*dar al-salam*) and the paradise of security and peace, in case you are among the felicitous and the friends of the *Haqq;* or your home will be the abode of fire and torture, if, God forbid, you should be among the wretched and the enemies of the *Haqq*, as Allah has said: "On the Day of Resurrection a group will be in paradise and a group in hell."

Every breath that you take is a step towards the stage of death. Every day of your life is equal to a *parsang*.
Each month is like a stage (*marhalah*)and each year like a station (*manzil*). Your journey is like the movement of the sun and the moon - yet you are oblivious of this journey and movement - and in your ignorance and forgetfulness you have failed to make ready and equip yourself properly for the station (*manzil*) of the grave and the onward journey to the station of the Day of Resurrection and your eternal and real home.

But the voluntary journey is of two kinds: one is the journey of the souls and the hearts toward the Almighty and All-powerful King of the world. The second is a physical

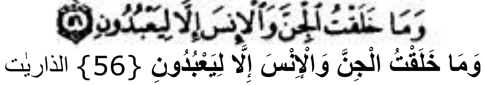
journey (*safar jismani*)in the earth of God. We will devote a separate chapter to each one of these two journeys, so that you receive the required guidance for attaining their goals and are guided in preparing the means, in opening the gates, and in learning the principles (*adab*), which will be your companion and assistant in matters relating to every good and piety, and so that it assists the people of love (*`ishq*) and yearning during their journey, and serve *insha' Allah ta'ala,* for the compiler as a provision for the Day of Resurrection vis-a-vis his Lord (*Mawla*).

O Lord, open the gates of Your grace and mercy to us! O Lord, Who art Bounteous and Magnanimous!

Chapter 1

Regarding the Spiritual Journey Towards the Glorious Lord and the Significance of This Journey.

O slave of God, know that God, the Exalted, created man only in order to enable his heart or spirit to make the journey towards Him and to attain communion with Him, and to observe His Glory and Beauty, which is the ultimate end of all purposes and goals and the end of all bounties and gifts. The world and whatsoever in it, as well as the other world and whatsoever is in it, have been created for the same purpose. The advent of the prophets and messengers and the revelation of the Qur'an and the other scriptures - all are meant to fulfil the same purpose. As God says:



وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ {56} الذاريٰت

And I did not create the jinn and the human kind except that they should serve (*or worship*)Me. (*51:56*)

Ibn `Abbas (May God be pleased with him) said that here *li ya'budun* (that they may serve Me) means *li ya`rifun* (that they may know Me). That is, all have been created in order to know Me. According to a sacred tradition (*hadith qudsi*), God has said:

كُنتُ كَنزاً مَخفِياً فَأحبَبتُ أنْ أعرَفَ فَخَلَقتُ الخَلقَ لِكَيْ أعرَفَ.

كنتُ كنزا مخفيا فاحببتُ ان أُعرَفَ فخلقتُ الخلقَ لكي أُعرَفَ

I was a hidden treasure; then I wished to become known. Then I created the creation, so that I may be known.

But as to the meaning of this journey, know that man's heart is confronted with veils, obstacles and great distances (of separation from God).

There are also for it degrees, stages and stations of proximity to God. If one does not overcome the hurdles of the path, one cannot attain any degree of proximity to God.

The Sacred Lord (*Hadrat al-Quds*) will not be revealed until and unless He (or he?, the seeker?) tears away the veils of the self (*hujubal-nafs*).

- So the first veil, which is the cause of separation from the Almighty Lord (*Hadrat al-`Izzah*)is ignorance regarding Him, ascribing of partners to the One (*shirk*), and doubt in His attributes of Glory and Perfection. All this amounts to the negation (*kufr*)to God, the Exalted, which is the greatest and the darkest of all veils, as God has said:

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِۦ...

Surely Allah does not forgive *that partners should be ascribed to Him.* (*4: 48, 116*)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ
وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا {48} النساءَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ
وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا {116} النساءَ

Se it is essential for the seeker of God to change the darkness of ignorance of his heart into illumination by means of the light of knowledge, to attain the light of certainty (*yaqin*) by removing the darkness of doubt, to reach *Tawhid* by coming out of the darkness of polytheism, and to attain the light of

faith by freeing himself from the perplexity of negation. Otherwise his body and soul will remain in eternal darkness and damnation in the lowest levels of hell, which God has ordained for the unbelievers, infidels and the enemies of God.

The second stage on the path of attaining proximity to God is that of obedience (*ta'ah*) and servitude (*`ubudiyyah*) to Him, for God has commanded: O mankind, worship your' God! Moreover, the Prophet (S) has narrated from the Exalted Authority that He has said:

Those who seek nearness to Me do not succeed in attaining their goal except in proportion to their fulfilment of all that I have made obligatory for them. My servant always seeks nearness to Me by means of the *nawafil* (supererogatory acts of worship) until he attains to My love for him.

Hence, whoever really knows his Master (*Mawla*) must obey Him, and whoever has discovered his Lord must worship Him; otherwise he will remain in the darkness of sins at the levels of blasphemy, for sin is one of the stages of remoteness (*bu`d*) from God and obedience is a means to His nearness.

The third of the stages of nearness is good conduct. Therefore, it is for the seeker of *Haqq* to transform his unworthy conduct into a praiseworthy one, because every praiseworthy conduct is considered to be a means of nearness to the Lord.
As every moral vice is a step in the direction away from Him and which incites His displeasure,

- the true seeker is obliged to turn himself from the darkness of pride to the light of humility,
- from the meanness of jealousy to the virtue of affection and compassion,
- from the baseness of stinginess to the loftiness of magnanimity,

- from the dark abyss of ingratitude to the bright heights of gratitude,
- from the darkness of hypocrisy to the light of sincerity,
- from the desert of attachment to superficial beauty and riches of the corporeal world to the garden of love and reliance upon the Lord of the heavens and the earth,
- from the darkness of (false sense of) security (and unawareness) to the light of the fear of God,
- from the obscurity of despair (and distrust) to the light of hope and trust,
- from the shadows of wrath and anger to the light of patience and tolerance,
- from the darkness of impatience and anxiety while facing adversity and calamity to the light of patience and unconditional surrender to the bitterness of fate,
- from the darkness of negligence to the light of awareness and remembrance,
- from the darkness of perplexity and waywardness to the light of resignation and humility,
- from the darkness of dependence on worldly means to the light of submission to the will of the Lord of all lords,
- and from the darkness of slavery of lust and sensuality to the light of obedience to the exalted Creator.

Thus, this journey is one of the most important journeys, and it is obligatory for all the seekers of Divine nearness, and the seekers of the highest felicity and the eternal abode in the Hereafter, to perform this journey.

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The fourth stage of the spiritual journey is that of the journey through the Beautiful Names (*al-'asma' al-husna*) and the Exalted Attributes (*sifat*) of *Haqq*. For when a seeker purifies his inner being (*batin*) of the causes of distance (from God) and refines and polishes his heart with the etiquettes of

nearness, he will be worthy of proceeding towards the Master of the Kingdom, the effect of God's love and His grace having manifested itself in him. At this stage, there is a difference in the ranks of the *awliya'* and *asfiya'* (the elect).

Abu `Abd Allah Muhammad ibn `Ali al-Tirmidhi said: "God, Exalted and Glorious, taught His Names to His slaves, and every Name pertains to a particular (spiritual) domain (*iqlim*)

- and for every domain there is an authority (*sultan*).
- And every domain has its assembly, discourse, gifts and rewards that are bestowed upon the people of that *iqlim.*
- And He has assigned special stations to the hearts of the elect. It may happen that a *wali* stays in the first *iqlim,* for out of God's Names he knows only the name pertaining to that *iqlim.* It often happens that one of the *awliya'* has a station in the second, third, and fourth *iqlim* at the same time. Hence, whenever he turns towards a particular *iqlim,* the Name of that *iqlim is* conferred upon him, so that he reaches the stage of the *wali* who partakes of all the Names. He is the one who is benefited by all the Names and he is the chief of the *awliya'*."

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Al-Tirmidhi says further: "That which the common people partake of the Divine Names is their faith in these Names.

As to those who are in the Middle position (*ashab al-yamin*), as well as the common *awliya'*, their share of the Divine Names depends on the opening of their hearts (*sharh-e sadr*) to these Names and the light that shines in them by means of the knowledge (*ma`rifah*) of the Divine Attributes. Everybody enjoys according to his capacity and the measure of spiritual light that his heart possesses. But the benefit that the elect among the *awliya'* - who are totally ridden of the garb of earthly attachments and clad in a new spiritual attire - enjoy, comprises of direct observation of Divine Attributes, and reception of their light within their hearts. From what our

Shaykh (God's mercy be upon him) has mentioned, it appears that every *wali* enjoys a station specially assigned to him, which he does not surpass, and this station is accorded to him by God in accordance with his ability and capacity and the degree decreed for him by God. Hence when his heart attains to that known station, his mystical wayfaring reaches its destination and his journey culminates. In this journey there is no question of moving from one place to another; neither does it refer to a wayfarer's movement in space nor that of the destination sought. For God, the Exalted, is closer to a person than his own jugular vein. Here, by `journey' is meant the removal of the veils that obstruct the vision of the heart and the light of Divine Attributes from shining in the wayfarer's heart. This is the same journey for which man has been created.

Chapter 2

On the Outward Principles of This Journey

You should know that this journey of the heart towards God requires observance of certain rules (*adab*), some of which are related to the outward (*zahir*) and certain others to the inward (*batin*).

The first principle relating to the outward is that the wayfarer should give up material possessions and means and detach himself from worldly engagements. He should not have any engagement except the service of his Master and obedience to Him and His remembrance. [1] God, the Exalted, has said:

وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا {8} المزمل

Remember the Name of thy Lord, and devote thyself unto Him very devotedly. (73:8)

The second principle consists of seclusion and detachment from people, especially from everyone who hinders one from approaching God. And God has said to the Prophet (S): "Keep away from them and avoid those who call upon everything other than God."

The third principle is that the wayfarer (*salik*) should protect the seven organs of his body from what is abominable to his Master, God. They are as follows:

- The eyes should be shut from looking at what is prohibited and is not beneficial for one;
- the ears should not listen to slander, vilification and obscene words, and the like;
- the tongue is to be protected from the same kind of errors
- and the lips should be sealed from speaking what is devoid of benefit. And some `urafa' have said,
    - one's speech should be in remembrance of God,
    - one's silence should be an effort to contemplate,
    - one's looking at things should be for deriving a lesson.
- The *salik* should also protect his belly from unlawful and suspect things, and in the case of lawful things also he should not consume greedily, lustfully in a state of being oblivious of God; rather, while eating food he should be awake and aware of God's presence.
- In the same way, he should protect his feet
- and hands
- as well as his sexual organs from what is unlawful and abominable.

The fourth principle is that *salik* should oppose his carnal self (*nafs*), that is, fight against its urges in desiring good food, good drink, good clothing, sensuous acts, and possessing a good mount for riding, etc. This is the *jihad akbar* (the higher struggle) about which the Prophet (S), the supreme leader of mankind, said: "You have returned from *jihad asghar* (the minor *jihad*) to the *jihad akbar* (the major *jihad*)."

And this *jihad* is more important and its fruits are more comprehensive than fighting against infidels (*kuffar*), for infidels, in war, seek wealth and are subject to the urges of

their carnal self (*nafs*) which lead them to their everlasting perdition and eternal privation. According to the *`urafa'*, subordination to the *nafs* is just like throwing firewood into flames, and the seeker (*talib*) and the *salik,* in order to get rid of his *nafs,* should extinguish that fire in himself.

The fifth principle is that the *salik* should seek out an aware, perfect and wise *shaykh* in order to guide him on the path of attaining perfection so that he may attain to *Haqq;* for the seeker is like a patient who is surrounded by various maladies and evils and afflicted by numerous diseases and ailments. The *salik*is unaware of them, and even if he is aware, he does not know how to cure his *nafs.* So he has no option but to seek out a compassionate and friendly physician who can diagnose his diseases and help him to recover and overcome his maladies. In other words, the *salik is* like a traveller in a perilous and dreadful desert, who has no choice but to find a guide in order to be led to his destination.

The sixth principle is that the *salik* should not busy himself with a medley of supplications, remembrances (*adhkar*, *pl.* of *dhikr*) supererogatory prayers (*nawafil*) and different kinds of practices, but should devote to a single form of *dhikr* and perform all the obligatory prayers and prescribed forms of worships (*fara'id wa sunan*). Only then he should immerse himself into the remembrance of God. It is said that *dhikr is* the key to the hidden world (*`alam al-ghayb*) and the lamp of the inner world. Without a key one cannot enter a house and without a lamp a dark house is not illuminated. Hence the *salik* should remember God in the way a lover remembers his beloved, and the remembrance must never leave him. Then he must so much persevere in *dhikr* that *dhikr* gets attached to him, not leaving his heart empty of *dhikr* even for a moment. When he continues in this *dhikr,* it is transformed from human *dhikr* into celestial and holy (*qudsi*) *dhikr.* `Human *dhikr' is* that which is done with the help of sounds, letters

and numbers, while the *dhikr qudsi* is that which is free from numbers, letters and sounds. After this stage, the *dhakir* (doer of *dhikr*) loses his identity and is submerged within the object *dhikr*. He becomes unaware of his *dhikr* as well as his own being. There are many degrees of *dhikr*, some [of] which are superior to the others, which are hard to begin; but gradually hardship and labour disappears and *dhikr* becomes the nature and habit of the *salik.*

The seventh principle is to keep constant fast, for this act signifies opposition to and suppression of the carnal self, which is the root cause of all veils, the ground of separation and remoteness from *Haqq.* If a *salik* reduces his food gradually, it is permissible. This is the way which has been followed by some Sufi masters (*mashayikh*). It is also proper if one adopts a middle path, i.e. observes moderation. Muhammad (S) said: "Keep your self (*nafs*) in a sound state, because it is what carries you about (*markub*)*;* you should be kind to it and take care of it." The Prophet (S) further said: "Whoever makes his faith extremely austere for himself, his *nafs* overwhelms him and subordinates him." If it happens that the *salik* has to break his non-obligatory (*mustahabb*) fast in order to please his guest or at the signal of his spiritual guide (*murad*), he should not let the self enjoy to its full, but take food in minimum quantity and eat lesser than he is used to eat on the days when he keeps fast, so that he may deprive his *nafs* from two pleasures (one is the breaking of fast and the other is the pleasure of taking food to the heart's satisfaction). Moreover, he should not always take bread along with stew (but be content with bread only), for this practice is considered abominable by Sufi masters (*mashayikh*), particularly if stew is prepared with meat.

The eighth principle is taking care of bodily cleanness, for such cleanness is the weapon of a believer and it evokes inner enlightenment. The Prophet (S) said: *Wudu'* (ablution)

performed on *wudu’* shall be as light upon light on the Judgement's Day."

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The ninth principle is to keep vigil in nights. This practice is considered to be one of the most important acts of the *salik.* In the praise of the virtuous (*abrar*), God, the Exalted, says:

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ ۝١٧

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ {17} الذاريٰت

They used to sleep but little of night ....(*51:17*)

It means that they sleep little at night, and the night is the time of supplication for the *awliya’* and the pure.

The tenth principle for the *salik* is that he should strive his best to get lawful (*halal*) means of livelihood. God, the Exalted, has said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ ...

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ
وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ (البقرة 172)

Eat of the good things We have provided you... (*2:172*)

And the Prophet (S) said: "After the obligatory duties, it is obligatory to seek lawful livelihood"; that is, after the duty of faith it is the most obligatory of one's obligations. The lawful earning makes the inner being (*batin*) illuminated, and unlawful earning darkens the heart. The `urafa' have said: Whoever is nourished by lawfully earned things for forty days, God will illuminate his heart. In case the absolutely lawful is not available due to the prevailing dubious character of that which is earned, he should eat that which is less

susceptible to doubt, and that too is to be taken according to one's minimum necessity and not to one's need and satiation. If the seeker acts with negligence in this regard, he will not be in a position to benefit from the fruits of the tree of `irfan. The author of the treatise (may God have mercy upon him) says, a disciple (*murid*) should not, even in the days of hardship and need, take even a grain of sesame that is doubtful, to say nothing of taking such a thing during normal and easier circumstances. The root cause of corruption of the world's people is their carelessness regarding this matter, as well as their lack of abstinence from unlawful and doubtful food. The Messenger of God (S) said: "The criteria of religion are piety and fear of God, and faith is corrupted because of greediness."

Here end the outward rules prescribed for the *salik*. There are also many inward rules followed by the people of the spiritual path (*tariqah*).

Notes:

[1]. It does not mean that the wayfarer should not get involved in any social activity, but that he should live in such a way that whatever he does should be for the sake of God, and whatever pursuit or service he chooses should be a means to attaining Divine nearness. In this state, all one's acts and pursuits, though they appear to be worldly are in reality for the Hereafter, that is the world which is -superior to this world.

چيست دنيا؟ از خدا غافل شدن
ني قماش و خانه و فرزند و زن.



What is `the world' *except the* forgetfulness of God.
It is not family, possessions, wife and children.

Chapter 3

On the Inward Rules of This Journey

First is keeping watch over the self (*nafs*). That is, the *salik* should always keep vigil over his heart. He should not neglect it even for a moment; for otherwise he would succumb to his carnal desires and Satanic temptations. He should consider himself as being watched by God, as He has said:

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ رَقِيبٗا ١

يا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا
رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۚ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا {1}

...Surely Allah has been a watcher over you (*4:1*).

The Prophet (S) said:

God watches your heart and acts
not your apparent behaviour and worldly belongings.

Second is the expression of humility, poverty and abasement before the Lord of the world. Ba Yazid (may Allah hallow his mighty soul) said that a voice (*sarush*) called me from within and said:
"O Ba Yazid! There are many servants in Our service. So if you seek Us, bring humility and neediness."
Ba Yazid further said: "You know for certain that you are in a crying need of your Lord at every hour on many counts; so you are needful of His guiding light as well as His merciful glance, guidance and His sustenance at every moment. And,

also, you are in need of Him at the time of death so that the light of Islam and its knowledge are kept intact in your heart. In the grave, too, you are in need of Him so that you successfully answer the questions asked by Nakir and Munkar (names of two angels). It is He Who will be your friend in the terrors of the grave. The greatest of all of your needs is your dependence on Him in the Day of Judgement, the day of regret and remorse, so that God, the Exalted, may make your face luminous, conceal your blemishes (with His mercy) and enhance the weight and worth of your good works in His balance (*mizan*), that He may facilitate the clearance of your account and put the book of your deeds in your right hand, that He may keep you firm on the Path (*shat*) and save you from hell-fire and lead you towards paradise. His highest generosity and the most excellent favour is to bless you with His beatific vision."

These are your essential needs with regard to your Master in this world and the other world. Hence your expression of poverty and humility before God should be according to your real poverty and need.

The third principle is repentance (*tawbah*) and penitence (*inabah*) before God, in all conditions of hardship and affluence, comfort and calamity. Referring to the Prophet Sulayman (Alaihissalam), God said: "He was a good servant, because he was penitent." God said the same thing about the Prophet Ayyub (A), for Sulayman (A) saw his Benefactor in His bounties (*ni'mah*) and Ayyub (A) saw the One who tries in His trials. Neither did the bounties enjoyed by the former blur his vision of the Provider, nor the hardship and tribulations of the latter veil his sight from seeing the hand of their Sender. In both the cases, they attributed all that happened to the Lord.

The fourth principle is surrender (*taslim*) to the command of God, the Exalted. *Taslim* means to surrender to God both with

the heart and the body, both of which are under His ownership. To surrender a property to its owner is an essential condition (of submission). The owner has the right to control his property and dispose it in any way He deems proper. It is up to Him whether He honours or disgraces His slave, breathes life in him or kills him, causes sickness or bestows health on him, makes him rich or poor. Hence it is required of a *salik* not to raise any objection against His will. He should not complain overtly or covertly, for the protest against the real owner is absurd and violation of all norms. Complaint against the lord by someone who claims to be his slave and lover is a shortcoming in one's love, servitude and devotion.

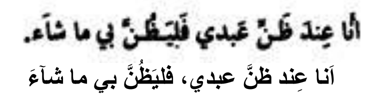
The fifth principle is *rida* (acquiescence), i.e. accepting Divine dispensations without questioning though they be bitter. The common believers take recourse in patience (*sabr*) when a calamity befalls. But the state of the elect in a similar situation is that of *rida.* The difference between *sabr* and *rida* is that the patient person (*saabir*), by virtue of his faith, faces calamity with forbearance; his faith remains unshaken and he does not get disturbed in times of calamity; he will not deviate from the path of servitude, howsoever great and unbearable the calamity should be but his heart resents the calamity. But the acquiescent person (*radi*) is the one whose heart is always in the state of acquiescence and happiness. Calamity and affluence do not affect him, for whatever he receives (from God), he considers it as a gift from a friend. He enjoys hardships inflicted upon him by his Beloved and Friend with the same pleasure as others enjoy favours. [2]

The sixth principle is permanent grief (*huzn*). The Prophet (S) said: "God loves every grieving heart." Regarding the Prophet's attributes it is said that he was always in the state of contemplation and grief. According to the `urafa', every heart which is devoid of grief is nothing but clay. How can a believer manage to be cheerful while he does not know what

was written by the pen of pre-eternity about his fate, whether it is felicity or wretchedness. Also, he is unaware of his end, for he does not know what he will earn tomorrow (in the way of virtue or vice). He does not know whether his obedience will be accepted by God or not, and whether his sins will be pardoned or not.

Shaykh Abu al-Hasan al-Kharqani was among the people of grief. One day he was asked the reason of the grief of the great mystics. He replied that the reason is that they want to know God as He deserves to be known. But that is impossible. For no one can know God as He deserves to be known.

The seventh principle is to have good faith (*husn al-zann*) in God, the Exalted. And He said in a sacred tradition (*hadith qudsi*):



I treat My servant in accordance with his opinion of Me,
so let him have whatever opinion he has.

Therefore, it is necessary for a servant of God to have good faith in God or a favourable opinion of Him. This state is reached as a result of discerning the Attributes of Beauty of God, comprising generosity, mercifulness, magnanimity, and the vastness of His forgiveness. Whoever mistrusts God or has an unfavourable opinion of his Lord and loses hope in His mercy. He considers his vices and sins bigger than the capacity of God's generosity and mercy. This amounts to ascribing defect and shortcoming to God.

The eighth rule is that one should not consider oneself out of reach of God's devising (*makr*). As God has said:

أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ ۚ فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ {99}

أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

Are they then secure from Allah's scheme? None deem himself secure from Allah's scheme save the losers. (*7:99*)

Further He has said:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالدَّوَابِّ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ كَذَٰلِكَ ۗ
إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ {28} فاطر

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ...

The erudite among His bondmen only fear Allah .... (35:28)

This fear and awe is produced in one who contemplates God's attributes of magnificence and wrath. For, in the same way as God is attributed with the qualities of generosity and mercifulness, He is attributed with wrathfulness and power as well. God, the Exalted, has said:

لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

Surely I shall fill the hell with the firm and mankind together. (11:119)

It is said in a tradition that God, the Exalted, will say to Adam (Alaihissalam):

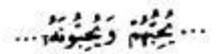
"Arise and throw them into the hell-fire!"

Adam will ask: "How many?"

The reply would be: "Nine-hundred-and-ninety out of every thousand".

Then how can a slave with his burden of sins avoid being fearsome of Divine wrath and might after having been aware of it?

The ninth principle is *love* (*mahabbah*). In this regard God has said



...He loves them, and they love Him... (5:54)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ
فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ
أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ
يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ۚ
ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ {54}

[Pickthal 5:54] O ye who believe! Whoso of you becometh a renegade from his religion, (know that in his stead) Allah will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble toward believers, stern toward disbelievers, striving in the way of Allah, and fearing not the blame of any blamer. Such is the grace of Allah which He gives unto whom He will. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.

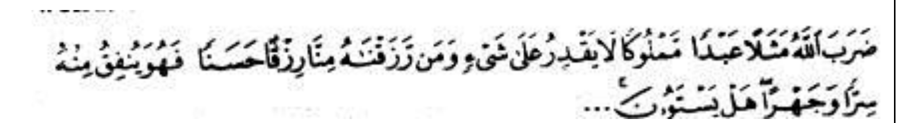
Love is the essence of all stations (*maqamat*) and virtues (*karamat*) by means of which the slave of God progresses toward the Lord of the heaven and the earth, and by virtue of which he will attain to the higher degrees of the journey (*suluk*). Love is the fruit of the knowledge of the Beautiful Names of God. No one possesses beauty (which is his own) in the world except God. Whatever beauty and perfection is seen in the creatures is, in fact, a particle of the sun of His beauty, a drop from the oceans of His perfection. If you consider beauty and perfection to be confined to material forms and worldly things, know that you are imprisoned within the world of (corporeal) form and are deprived of observing the reality. For, the real beauty and rational perfection are found in the essence of a being that possesses power and life, has the

attributes of generosity, benevolence, forbearance, and is devoid of any shortcoming and defect.
It is due to this reason that

- the generous, the noble, and the wise are loved by all.
- Similarly, the warrior and the courageous are loved due to their might,
- and the learned and the pious are respected due to their honesty and purity.

You know that each one of these attributes of glory and beauty are inherent in the Divine Essence, which possesses them infinitely and eternally. But beings other than God possess a beauty and perfection that is limited, reckonable, accidental, finite and mortal. Even such attributes are borrowed from the Divine ocean of bounty and beneficence. Hence, none except God deserves to -be loved in the real sense, for every form of beauty (*jamal*)is derived from Him. So everyone who loves something other than God is surely blind to the beauty of God.

The tenth principle is to give up reliance on one's will (*mashi'ah*)and freedom (*ikhtiyar*)and to take up trust in the Omnipotent Lord of *the* world. God has said:



Allah coins a similitude: (*On the one hand*) *a slave who has control of nothing, and* (*on the other hand*) *one on whom We have bestowed a fair provision from Us, and he spends them secretly and openly. Are. they equal? ....* (16:75)

So a slave has nothing to do with freedom, for freedom suits those who are free. And the `urafa' have said, if a seeker has a single desire, it means that his vision is obstructed by veils. They have also said that this (desire) is the greatest of veils.

Hence even the desire of union with God is the darkest of all veils. So when even the desire of proximity to God is considered to be the greatest veil, what is to be said about the condition of one who is plunged in sensual desires and mundane enticements? Thus it is essential for a seeker to be like the corpse in the hands of the bathers (*ghussal*), so that he may attain communion with *Haqq*. Every desire takes one away from God.

The above-mentioned principles are most important for inner perfection (*batin*)with which a *salik*should adorn his self (*nafs*)in order to be admitted-into the proximity of God. Otherwise his sincerity and aspiration will be deemed false; his love will be merely a false claim; though he may consider himself as a wayfarer towards God, in reality he is plunged in the dungeons of sensuality.

Notes:

[2]. Imam `Ali (A), in a famous sermon named Khutbat Hammam, describing the qualities of the pious says:

نُزِّلَتْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ مِنْهُمْ فِي الْبَلاءِ كَالَّتِي نُزِّلَتْ فِي الرَّخاءِ.

...They are as happy in the face of calamity
as others are in the state of comfort.

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(Also recited: See in the audio section)